

**RICAT Minutes**  
**Office of Rehabilitation Services**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room**  
**40 Fountain Street ~ Providence, RI 02903**

**June 9, 2005**

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Panarace at 2:30 p.m.
- Members present: Jill Waller, Jeanne Panarace, Emily Lennon, James Litvack, Charlie Pollock, John Benevides, Richard Gaffney, Ying Sun, Kathy Samways, Joe Murphy, Flo Adeni-Awosika
- ATAP Partners: Lezlee Shaffer, Lisa Labitt
- ATAP Project Director: Regina Connor
- Acceptance of Minutes: Minutes were not completed. The minutes from the conference call are supposed to be placed on RESNA's website for review.
- Chairperson's Report: Chair Panarace met with Committee chairs who updated her on their activities over the last 6 months. They are developing goals and objectives. They also discussed alternating locations for meetings. Regina shared with her a document outlining possible requirements for the State AT Plan which includes a short section on the role of the council. Attachment 3 states the Council has to identify members of the council and the type of category each person falls into. Also required is how often the council meets, how it is organized, and the process for decision-making and planning. They also are looking for the methods members were solicited or appointed. Regina added that the draft includes 11 attachments or sections that the state lead agency, ORS, will need to describe all the required activities and how to perform those activities. She stated it can also include the by-laws of the council and history of this council. Attachment 4 also references the Council and how it needs to have an active role in developing measurable objectives for the program. Regina will be in Washington next week attending an in-depth training on the development of state plans. They would like to have a series of meetings over the summer. When plan is due has not been determined yet. Jeanne added they would like to set up one or two subcommittees as needed. If council thinks it is of value, they could also have a public hearing similar to the rehabilitation portion of funding. Fiscal year begins October 1<sup>st</sup>. They do have a document that can be utilized as they develop the goals. The comprehensive satisfaction survey could be used as a basis to determine what consumers and family members and service providers see as the needs around AT. Richard asked if the program has been funded. Regina responded it is funded for fiscal year '06. National AT has put in \$29M in the not sure if it's for AT or AFP. Kathy asked if, with regards to the forum or public input, it would be possible to tack our forum onto the GCD's. Regina stated we do also have to demonstrate public input into the state plan. Charlie commented that he has a booklet from DEA that has a list of every number of someone to call for help needed. He feels we should develop one. Jeanne responded there are several resources guides in the state. Regina added that we need to update all of our materials. Jeanne also asked Charlie if that booklet covered deaf or hard of hearing and if alternative numbers (TTY) were listed.

- Committee Reports:

- Membership/Outreach – Jill stated there will be ads in the Providence Journal on 5/1 and 5/4. They are currently lacking consumers. They have received 3 resumes in and have sent out 4 applications. They will be setting up interviews asap. Jill gave members applications and fact sheets so they can get the word out to people or groups they know of who might be interested. Kathy asked if a HS student who is a consumer of AT could become a member. Regina responded as long as the student would be able to make the meetings there is no age limits set. Consumers have to make sure 51% on council. Ying asked how many vacancies there were. Jill answered this was Blair's 4<sup>th</sup> meeting missed, and he would be receiving a letter stating that. Then they would be looking for 4 vacant spots. Jill stated that with the new AT Act, Michael Spoerri would be representing DOH, Kim Carson representing RIDE, Jim Litvack from PARI, but questioned what the State Workforce Investment Board was. Regina responded it was a program under which vocational rehabilitation resides. Adding that RICAT does not have a representative from the Greater RI Workforce Investment Board yet. Even if any of those have a disability they can't be counted as consumers. Jeanne asked if that was in the by-laws. Regina responded it was. Jill stated they will be looking for 4 more members since Brian Chace and Blair Baldwin were notified of the lack of attendance to meetings. Jeanne added that Kim responded to Regina and said she was attending a funeral today but would like to get minutes. If Michael cannot make it to the meetings, someone from his committee might be able to attend.
- Legislative - Richard stated he was not sure of what's going on at the state level. They have been looking at bills affecting visually impaired. They are also trying to get the Governor to appoint a disabled person to the RIPTA board. Right now with the separation of powers, the Governor has the authority to appoint. There are also a couple of bills regarding red lights which would allow RIPTA buses to change the traffic light. His argument is that blind people listen for the traffic, and they know when it is time to cross, but if this bill will were to pass, they would never know. Lisa questioned what their reasoning was behind that thought. Richard answered that people want to see transit move faster. A couple of other bills were about cars running red lights, however, those are controversial. On the Federal level, administration plans to reduce the commissioner's position of RSA to be appointed by the Department of Education instead of the President. Also they want to close all of the RSA's regional offices. The Federation was opposed to that. They had a rally in Washington on May 26<sup>th</sup> where for the first time in 65 years those in NFB and the Council of the Federation of the Blind marched side by side. Regina added they also had 2 NFB of RI members at that rally. Federation had other pending legislation with Social Security and Randall Shepard Program. Jeanne added that in the Legislative Letter, there was something on both state and federal levels regarding health and coverage of hearing aids. Jim commented that people testified, however, basically because everyone was saying the same thing they asked them to give them their letters, and then it was tabled. Richard stated it would be nice if they could refine the newsletter. Jeanne responded maybe there is a possibility to do a keyword search to make it easier to go through legislative newsletter.
- Communications - Joe stated the committee met last week. Ying, Ron and Joe attended. They asked that everyone look at the website. Lot of pop up ads on discussion board. They also talked about having the ability or budget to purchase a box of demo items of AT. Dr. Sun and Kathy have gone out for some talks and if they had some demo material. Kathy added that TechACCESS is good about supplying them, however, Ying

asked about a box to keep for presentations. Jeanne asked if they have a budget. Regina responded they don't, however, ATAP would probably be able to fund it. TechACCESS is one of ATAP's partners. In that role they would be able to assist with that. With regards to a Speakers Bureau, they want to put it out that the whole committee be involved in the process. Regina commented that if there are going to more people involved, they might want to have a script so that the same message is being relayed. Talking points previously used were sent to Kathy. Any suggestion for additions or changes to the website can be sent to Joe or Sharon. They asked that everyone look at websites from other states and make suggestions. RESNA.org lists all projects and website addresses.

- Project Director's Report: Regina commented that ATAP's Annual (web-based) Report to the federal government was submitted on time despite of the fact it was due 5 weeks earlier than usual. Regina stated there are positive things in congress regarding funding for AT programs. President had proposed \$0 funding for 2006. The House Appropriations Committee had put money back in the budget, however, Regina is not sure of the breakdown of the dollars. Next week she will be in Washington for 2 days of intense training on the new form they will need to complete for the State Plan for AT. In the past, competitive grant applications were done. Now it is more like the VR program where there is a formula for funding. The State gets a certain amount based on the formula. If at some point when the contract sees fit to fund projects, we would be a minimal state that would get \$410,000. The state plan is an extensive document which will require a lot of information. Jeanne commented they will follow up with helpers for that project.
- ATAP Partners Report:
  - OSCIL: Lezlee stated they lost their ATAP specialist about a month ago, and she is wearing a 2<sup>nd</sup> hat again. They are in the process of hiring someone. In May they had scheduled presentations at senior centers. She was also at the South Kingstown Spring Senior Expo, the Barrington YMCA and the RIC School of Social Work fair. She had a chance to show off all the low tech AT objects, of which the needs were different at each place. OSCIL put on a symposium the end of last month on Macular Degeneration which included a panel of retina specialists. People were able to write questions and get answers. Lezlee stated she was amazed how many people would come up and ask how much will it cost to come to their house that were shocked at \$0. They are much more active with ORS specifically with deaf consumers. OSCIL had its annual meeting at the end of April where they awarded three \$1,000 scholarships which went to high school students to be used to attain AT devices to further their education goals. They are also receiving requests from resident service coordinators.
  - EBEC – Lisa stated she has been very busy winding down for the school year. They had two live webcasts from Altech in VT. One national webcast was on Universal Design and one on AT and technology which were well attended. They would like to repeat several next year. Lisa has been working closely with RITAP and RIDE, and OSN. Office of Instruction and Teacher Certification invited them in to do preliminary training for teachers from all over on Universal Design on instruction strategies and engaging students. She met with 120 teachers and they wrote grade level expectations. Training on these lesson plans make sure they are accessible. Training this week on Training for Teachers of the VI and others at RIC had to do with IEP. Barry Grossi and Lynn Rossi expanded the core curriculum which included a 3- hour transportation training. The last training was a Senior Project training for challenged learning. As of Class of 2008, there has been a huge change in what high school seniors need to graduate which include a digital portfolio and a Senior project. Collaboratives involved

had 29 high schools involved. They provide modifications of AT, so all seniors could achieve these projects. RI chose a different route to go where they are not doing end-of-class exams. With No Child Left Behind, they have been testing kids a lot. Teachers need to have this information. They held a transition forum for students with disabilities for students transitioning from school to work force. There were 20 different agencies there, however they had a poor turnout where the agencies outnumbered the students. Joe had been at that too. Some AT trainings in July are usually full. Lisa stated she is out in schools constantly. One other thing was that Lisa had brought a family guide for AT. She would like to do more training with RIPIN, and would like to get back on their calendar. AT has fallen off their calendar. Jeanne recalled that a couple years back the staff in her division (EI, D&H) had looked at the IEP and at that time it did not address AT. Lisa stated it is verbally brought up at every IEP meeting. They have to actually decline it. Flo stated she works in Special Education at Central High and added she needs to talk to Lisa about some concerns.

- Roundtable
  - Richard – stated that the NFB is also offering a \$500 scholarship to a student (senior or in college) who is legally blind. Contact NFB, PO Box 154564, Riverside, RI 02915 or email [Info@nfbri.org](mailto:Info@nfbri.org).
  - Jeanne commented that the physician information link is missing. She had always hoped that health care providers could be brought into this and link between AT and health care providers. Regina responded that several years ago, Kathy had done provider training, where she had talked to family practitioners. A lot of written information was provided. Jeanne stated she would love to continue that. Kathy added even if there could be a link on the medical association linked to RICAT so they know about AT. Jeanne asked Charlie to go through the DEA booklet to see which references are in there that relate to AT.
  - Richard – RIDE or taxis – there is a big change in prices for taxis. Previously, taxis were running turfs where taxies in East Providence couldn't come into Providence. There was a bill introduced in legislature yesterday lifting this situation about turfs. In the meantime the PUC lifted the whole thing. Now it is set up that if you want to arrange with any cab company at RIDE, as long as you are coming home in 24 hours, they can do it.
  - Emily questioned if there was an update on the AFP. Jeanne stated she didn't have the last meeting minutes with her, however, they are at a stalemate right now. Regina added that one option under the new law is to do a one-year feasibility study which is probably the option they may take right now. Their assumption is it would be a significant number of people who would access an AFP. Some states have had good volume of activity, some not. They need to look at it more closely before they move forward. Jeanne stated they needed an inventory before proceeding. RI does have an equipment loan program in the state statute, and they would need to look at that too. Jeanne stated that ATEL, the Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan program lends not only telephones but TTYs and other pieces of supportive equipment. There may be a need to institute a financial needs test for participants. ORS staff is working together on published materials.
- Next Meeting Date: August 11, 2005
- Adjournment: Motion was made by Richard G. and seconded by Jill W. that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.